



## Young Restaurateur Is On A Roll

Eric Jiang has more experience in running a successful small business than his 25 years would imply. Eric learned the sushi business from the inside out, starting as a sushi chef assistant by slicing cucumbers and making nishiki rice in a Japanese restaurant in New York City. After training and working as a sushi chef for five years, Eric opened his first Japanese restaurant in Virginia Beach when he was 21 years old. In 2007, Eric sold the business and moved to Upstate New York to open his second restaurant, Mitsuba Japanese Cuisine. Mitsuba serves capacity crowds seven days a week and Eric is on site daily, checking the appearance and freshness of dishes, planning new menus and more. Today, Eric is busier than ever as he prepares the last details before opening another restaurant in New Hartford this December.

Mitsuba's newest location will offer Hibachi and Southeast Asian cuisine in addition to the fusion sushi menu. Four top-notch Hibachi chefs recruited from California and New York City will turn chow time into show time, twirling knives in the air and while preparing the meals for customers seated around grilling stations. Southeast Asian dishes spanning the Pacific Rim from Thailand and China to Japan will be featured in the other half of the restaurant. The restaurant chefs will create a fusion of east and west on every plate while staying authentic to sushi cuisine. The new location will seat a maximum of 185 people between the hibachi stations, casual dine-in area for Southeast Asian cuisine and the full-service bar. To run a restaurant on this scale, Eric has almost 20 new hires: a general manager, four sushi chefs, four hibachi chefs, and 10 wait staff.

The new restaurant is now in the final stages of construction to completely transform a former Ground Round restaurant into a modern Japanese Steakhouse & Asian Bistro. Eric used a 90% SBA-guaranteed loan from M&T Bank to purchase and renovate the building over the past six months. With Recovery Act changes to temporarily eliminate borrower guaranty fees, Eric was able to save over \$7,000 in fees to reinvest in working capital. In the midst of a recession and tight credit conditions, M&T business banker Alicia Brockway found SBA's 7(a) program to be the right solution for Eric's financing needs.

With five years of restaurant business experience, Eric feels more than ready for the opportunities the new venture will create in the days and weeks ahead. "I want to bring Asian cuisine to this community and I want to make people happy with my food," he comments.